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Message Text

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STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-03
INR-07 NSAE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 PA-01 PRS-01 IGA-02
MMO-01 AGRE-00 /147 W
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P R 250635Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1345
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 MOSCOW 12331

FOR S/P LAKE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EGEN, ECIN
SUBJECT: NORTH-SOUTH STRATEGIES

REF: STATE 191928

SUMMARY: WHILE WE RECOGNIZE THAT THERE COULD IDEALLY BE
CONSIDERABLE VALUE IN ELICITING A GENUINE SOVIET CONTRIBUTION
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TO THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT PROSPECTS
FOR SUCCESS WARRANT A MAJOR US EFFORT TO ENLIST THE USSR IN
GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND INSTITUTIONS. IN FACT, THEIR
PARTICIPATION UNDER FORESEEABLE CIRCUMSTANCES COULD WELL
WORK TO OUR DISADVANTAGE. THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP ADHERES TO THE
DOCTRINE THAT CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME, REJECTS ANY OBLIGATION
TO ASSIST THE THIRD WORLD, AND PREFERS TO CONCENTRATE

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ITS AID THROUGH BILATERAL CHANNELS AT CAREFULLY TARGETED POLITICO-STRATEGIC GOALS. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THEIR OWN STAKE IN THE WORLD ECONOMIC ORDER, THE SOVIETS VIEW THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DEVELOPED WEST AND THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AS AN ESSENTIALLY ANTAGONISTIC ONE; EVEN WHERE A CONCRETE SOVIET ECONOMIC ADVANTAGE MAY BE INVOLVED IN REACHING A SOLUTION TO A GIVEN PROBLEM (CLEARLY THE MOST FAVORABLE CASE), THERE IS AN ALMOST IRRESISTIBLE TEMPTATION FOR THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP TO COMPLICATE ISSUES RATHER THAN TO PROMOTE SOLUTIONS.

ON THE OTHER HAND, WE REGARD IT AS POSSIBLE TO USE THE EXISTING BASIS OF US-SOVIET BILATERAL AGREEMENTS AND EXISTING MULTILATERAL FORA TO PROBE FOR SPECIFIC AREAS WHERE WE AND SOVIETS MIGHT UNDERTAKE COLLECTIVE OR COLLATERAL EFFORTS. AT THE OUTSET, AT LEAST, SUCH AN EFFORT WOULD BEST BE LOW IN PROFILE AND LIMITED IN SCOPE. EVEN HERE OUR INITIAL APPROACH WAS NOT GREETED ENTHUSIASTICALLY WHEN WE PROPOSED SUCH A PROJECT EARLIER THIS YEAR TO THE SOVIET MINISTRY OF HEALTH, BUT THERE ARE SOME IDENTIFIABLE FIELDS WHERE A JOINT EFFORT COULD AT LEAST BE DISCUSSED.

IN THOSE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS WHERE THE SOVIETS ARE PARTICIPATING BUT ARE CREATING OBSTACLES TO EFFECTIVE ACTION - FOR EXAMPLE, THE UN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM - WE BELIEVE THAT THE MOST EFFECTIVE STRATEGY WOULD BE TO WORK THROUGH CONFIDENTIAL

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THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE USSR, EITHER BILATERALLY OR IN MULTILATERAL FORA, TO IMPROVE THEIR PERFORMANCE. END SUMMARY.

1. SOVIET THINKING TOWARDS THE NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONSHIP AND POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION IN MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS WHERE THEY ARE NOT NOW REPRESENTED IS CONSERVATIVE IN THE SENSE OF MINIMIZING ANY CONCEIVABLE ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL BURDEN ON THE USSR OR OF INTRODUCING ANY INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES IN THE SOVIET SYSTEM ITSELF. AT THE SAME TIME THE SOVIETS SEE THEMSELVES AS COMPETITORS WITH THE WEST IN THE THIRD WORLD, SEEKING TO EXPLOIT THE DISSATISFACTION OR DISTRESS OF THE LATTER TO SOVIET NATIONAL ADVANTAGE AND PARTICULARLY TO THE EXTENSION OR ENHANCEMENT OF SOVIET INFLUENCE IN THOSE AREAS. WE BELIEVE THAT SOVIET THINKING MAY BEST BE ANALYZED IF SUBDIVIDED INTO ATTITUDES TOWARDS FOREIGN AID, MULTILATERAL ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE EST/WEST RELATIONSHIP.

2. SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE HAS REPEATEDLY BEEN MADE CLEAR AND PROBABLY WILL BE RESTATED IN DIPLOMATIC LANGUAGE AT NEXT REGULAR SESSION OF UNITED NATIONS GENERAL

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ASSEMBLY. ESSENTIALLY SOVIET DOCTRINE IS THAT THE DISTRESS
OF THE THIRD WORLD STEMS FROM COLONIALISM AND CAPITALIST
EXPLOITATION AND IS NO PROPER BURDEN, MORAL OR OTHERWISE, OF
USSR AND ITS "SOCIALIST" ALLIES. IN FACT, ALTHOUGH SOVIETS
LIKE TO DESCRIBE THEMSELVES AS POOR BOY WHO BECAME A GIANT,
THEY ALSO PLAY SLIGHTLY DISCORDANT THEME THAT USSR NEEDS
EVERY CENT FOR ITS OWN DEVELOPMENT AND HAS LITTLE TO SPARE
FOR OTHERS. FOR WANT OF OBLIGATION AND BECAUSE OF DOMESTIC
NEEDS, THIS THESIS CONTINUES, ABILITY OF USSR TO COME TO
ASSISTANCE OF THIRD WORLD IS THEREFORE NOT WITHOUT LIMITS.

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ISO-00 USIA-06 AID-05 EB-08 NSC-05 TRSE-00 SS-15
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 MOSCOW 12331

FOR S/P LAKE

NEVERTHELESS, USSR DOES PROVIDE ASSITANCE, PARTICULARLY
TO THOSE STATES WHO WISH TO COOPERATE. NATURALY, THIS AID
IS PRIMARILYINTENDED TO BUILD UP THE "STATE SECTOR" IN
RECIPIENT COUNTRIES. ALTHOUGH UNSTATED, THE SOVIETS

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TELL US WITHOUT ANY UNDUE EMBARRASSMENT THAT THEIR AID IS
EARMARKED TO SUPPORT SOVIET NATIONAL OBJECTIVES. THESE,
HOWEVER, MAY VARY OR FLUCTUATE ACCORDING TO CIRCUMSTANCES. A
NECESSARY COROLLARY OF THIS DOCTRINE OF LIMITED BUT CLEARLY
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TARGETED AID IS THAT IT BE MAINLY DISTRIBUTED THROUGH
BILATERAL CHANNELS. SOVIETS ALSO ARE NOT RELUCTANT TO
TELL US PRIVATELY THAT THEY WOULD NOT WISH TO SEE IMPACT
OF SOVIET AID CONTRIBUTION LOST IN A WASH OF MULTILATERAL
AID, THE DIRECTION OF WHICH THEY CANNOT FULLY CONTROL.
THE COMPELLING SOVIET RELUCTANCE TO PROVIDE PRECIOUS
RESOURCES, WITHOUT A CLEARLY DEFINED STRATEGIC TARGET,
ALSO RESPONDS TO A DEEP SEATED POPULAR FEELING THAT
CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME. IN THIS VEIN, THE SOVIET STATE
PLANNING COMMITTEE (GOSPLAN) OFFICIAL CHARGED WITH GOSPLAN'S
RELATIONS WITH NON-COMMUNIST COUNTRIES TOLD US THAT HE WAS
GLAD TO BE REPRESENTING THE USSR AT MANILA WORLD FOOD COUNCIL
MEETING (VICE SOVIET MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE) SINCE IT WOULD
BE EASIER FOR HIM TO AVOID ANY SOVIET COMMITMENT. SOVIET
UNWILLINGNESS TO MAKE THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UN DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM MORE USABLE TO POTENTIAL RECIPIENTS, WHILE IT INVOLVES
FEAR OF SLIDING TOWARDS CONVERTIBILITY, STRIKES US AS
BASICALLY A PLOY TO LIMIT THE DRAIN ON SOVIET RESOURCES TOWARDS
OBJECTIVES OUTSIDE SOVIET CONTROL. IN SUM, WE BELIEVE THAT
SOVIETS WILL CONTINUE TO BE SPARING WITH ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE
AND ATTENTIVE TO DERIVING THE MAXIMUM ADVANTAGE FOR THE USSR
FROM EVERY PIECE OF AID RENDERED.

3. SOVIET THINKING ON INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL ISSUES ALSO
ADVERSELY AFFECTS THE PROSPECT THAT THEY COULD BE INDUCED TO
PLAY A HELPFUL ROLE IN MULTILATERAL FORA SUCH AS THE
INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND AND THE WORLD BANK. NOT ONLY
DO THEY REGARD THESE INSTRUCTIONS AS UNDER AMERICAN CONTROL,
BUT THEY ALSO ENTERTAIN A PERHAPS UNREASONABLE FEAR THAT
THEIR OWN MEMBERSHIP WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO ERODING THE PROTECTIVE
WALL OF THEIR OWN NON-CONVERTIBLE CURRENCY. ALTHOUGH SOME
SOVIET LEADERS TO TOY FROM TIME TO TIME WITH HERETICAL
THOUGHTS OF IMF MEMBERSHIP, THE OVERWHELMING WEIGHT OF
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OPINION IS AND IS LIKELY TO REMAIN THAT THE NON-CONVERTIBLE
RUBLE AND ITS MYTHICAL VARIANT, THE SO-CALLED TRANSFERABLE
RUBLE, AND SUCH UTILIZATION OF AVAILABLE WESTERN CREDIT
FACILITIES AS IS NECESSARY, ARE FULLY ADEQUATE TO COVER ALL
THE SOVIET UNION'S INTERNATIONAL NEEDS IN THE FINANCIAL

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AREA. CONVERSATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT WITH SOVIET LEADERS
SELDOM GET PAST THESE TWO POINTS - AMERICAN DOMINATION
AND LACK OF SOVIET NEED. BUT BEHIND THEM PROBABLY
STANDS THE SUSPICION THAT CONVERTIBILITY WOULD BE DOWN THE
ROAD FROM MEMBERSHIP, AND AFTER THAT WOULD COME THE EVILS
OF SPONTANIETY AND CONSUMER SOVEREIGNTY, ERODING AND ULTIMATELY
DESTROYING THE ROLE OF THE PARTY AND THE GOVERNMENT TO PLAN
AND DECIDE WHAT WILL BE PRODUCED AND WHAT CONSUMED. SINCE
THE REALITY IS PROBABLY NOT NEARLY SO STARK AS THIS SOVIET
FEAR, THE SUBJECT IS THEORETICALLY OPEN TO DISCUSSION,
BUT IN PRACTICE WE FIND FEW RESPONSIBLE PERSONS HERE
WHO BELIEVE THAT THE SOVIET POSITION WILL SOON CHANGE.

4. IN ADDITION TO SOVIET RELUCTANCE TO BECOME ENGAGED,
ON THE ABOVE GROUNDS, WE SEE TOO LITTLE WILLINGNESS ON
THEIR PART TO RECOGNIZE A STAKE IN THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC
ORDER. ON THE OTHER HAND, EVEN WHERE THEIR EXPERTS DO PERCEIVE
SUCH AN INTEREST, THEIR VOICE IS LIKELY TO BE OVERRULED
BY HIGHER AUTHORITY MAINLY ATTUNED TO THE SPIRIT OF CUTTHROAT
COMPETITION WITH THE WEST FOR THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF THE
THIRD WORLD. WE WERE STRUCK, BUT NOT SURPRISED, TO NOTE THAT
IN THE MOST RECENT LAW OF THE SEA SESSION (STATE A-3095) THE
SOVIETS CAME DOWN ON THE SIDE OF MORE RESTRICTIVE CONTROLS
ON SEABED PRODUCTION. "THE SOVIET UNION BLOCKED ANY U.S.
ATTEMPTS TO FIND COMPROMISE. IT WOULD CLEARLY HAVE BEEN
POSSIBLE TO HAVE NEGOTIATED A BETTER TEXT WITH THE LDS'S
IF THE SOVIETS HAD BEEN SILENT. HOWEVER, ONE MEMBER OF THEIR
DELEGATION TOLD US THEIR POSITION HAD BEEN DETERMINED BY THE
POLITBURO AND WAS OF THE HIGHEST IMPORTANCE." WHILE SUCH AN
OUTCOME MIGHT NOT INVARIABLY OCCUR IN OTHER FORA, WE BELIEVE
IT INDICATIVE OF HOW THE SOVIET DECISION WOULD FALL ON CON-
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TROVERSIAL ISSUES WHERE NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS WOULD BE
DIFFICULT EVEN IN THE ABSENCE OF AN EXACERBATING THIRD PARTY.
SIMILARLY, ALTHOUGH THE CASE IS LESS CLEAR CUT, THE FACT
THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE GIVEN CONSISTENT PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR OPEC
PRICE INCREASES, WHILE TRYING TO UNDERMINE THE MODERATING
INFLUENCE SAUDI ARABIA, IS DUE MAINLY TO THEIR DESIRE TO
EXPLOIT WESTERN DIFFRENCES WITH THE LDS'S. (IT IS TRUE THAT
THE USSR, AS AN OIL EXPORTER, CURRENTLY BENEFITS FROM HIGHER
WORLD PRICES, BUT ITS ROLE AS SUPPLIER IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE
AND IN ANY CASE CAUSES PROBLEMS FOR THE SOVIET UNION'S
EASTERN EUROPEAN BRETHREN.)

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FOR S/P LAKE

5. DESPITE THE FOREGOING CONSIDERATIONS, WHICH WE BELIEVE MILITATE AGAINST ANY GENERAL US EFFORT TO TRY TO ENGAGE THE USSR IN GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND INSTITUTIONS, WE WOULD WELCOME A CAREFULLY ORGANIZED AND WELL TARGETED EFFORT TO SEEK SOVIET PARTICIPATION ON A SELECTIVE BASIS. IN SOME WORLD ORGANIZATIONS WHERE THE SOVIET UNION IS ALREADY REPRESENTED AND IN WHICH THE POLITICAL ASPECT IS RELATIVELY SUBDUED - PERHAPS WHO - WE CAN LOSE LITTLE BY ENCOURAGING
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CLOSER COOPERATION. ANOTHER AREA WHERE OBVIOUSLY SOVIET CONSTRUCTIVE INVOLVEMENT WOULD BE BENEFICIAL IS MULTILATERAL COMMODITY AGREEMENTS (MCA), ESPECIALLY THOSE IN WHICH USG IS MOST INTERESTED SUCH AS GRAIN AND SUGAR. WITH A SOVIET CHAIRING THE IWA NEXT YEAR, THEIR POWER TO EFFECT MCA

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WHEAT NEGOTIATIONS CANNOT BE IGNORED. WITH REGARD TO
OTHER MCA POSSIBILITIES BEING INDIVIDUALLY CONSIDERED UNDER
THE UNCTAD INTEGRATED PROGRAM FOR COMMODITIES, WE SHOULD
CONTINUE TO ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE SOVIET PARTICIPATION
BY INCLUDING THEM IN THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON A COMMODITY
BY COMMODITY BASIS WHEN IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO DO SO.
EVEN IN THOSE AREAS WHERE THE SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO HELP
HAS NOT BEEN VERY FORTHCOMING, WE CAN ENCOURAGE THIRD
WORLD COUNTRIESTO PUT DIRECT PRESSURE ON THE USSR TO
INCREASE THE SCALE AND FORM OF ITS PARTICIPATION TOWARDS
MUTUALLY AGREED OBJECTIVES.

6. ON BALANCE, HOWEVER, WE ARE MOST ATTRACTED TO THE IEA OF
DRAWING ON THE EXISTING FRAMEWORK OF US-SOVIET BILATERAL
AGREEMENTS TO TRY TO EST SOVIET INTEREST AND CAPABILITIES
IN JOINT ASSISTANCE PROJECTS. IN THIS CONTEXT WE DRAW
ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION
AND WELFARE HAS ALREADY BROACHED WITH THE SOVIET MINISTRY OF
HEALTH THE POSSIBILITY OF A COLLATERAL EFFORT ON HEALTH
RESEARCH AND HEALTH CARE FACILITIES IN A THIRD COUNTRY.
ADMITTEDLY, THE INITIAL SOVIET RESPONSE WAS NOT ENTHUSIASTIC,
BUT WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE MATTER IS BEING PURSUED BY HEW. A
CURSORY EXAMINATION OF THE TOTALITY OF OUR AGREEMENTS SUGGEST
A NUMBER OF AREAS WHERE THE SOVIETS HAVE CAPABILITIES WHICH
MIGHT COMPLEMENT A US PROGRAM IN AN LDC: FOR EXAMPLE, SEISMIC
RESEARCH, TSUANAMI PREDICTION, INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT,
MARINE ENVIRONMENTAL SEARCH (LAKE AND ESTUARY, FISH STOCKS,
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IRRIGATION) POWER TRANSMISSION AND GENERATION AND SOME AREAS
OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH. IF THE DEPARTMENT WERE INTERESTED
IN PURSUING THIS APPROACH, IT MIGHT WISH TO DISCUSS THESE
AND OTHER POTENTIAL AREAS OF COOPERATION WITH INTERESTED USG
TECHNICAL AGENCIES, WITH AN EYE TO COMING UP WITH SOME
PROJECTS WE COULD PROPOSE TO THE USSR DURING JOINT COMMISSION
MEETINGS DURING THE COURSE OF THE YEAR.

7. IN THE CASE OF A BILATERAL PROJECT OF THIS NATURE, IT
WOULD OF COURSE BE IMPORTANT TO BE CAREFULLY SELECTIVE AS TO
THE LDC OR LDC'S INVOLVED. A CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH THE
USSR WOULD HARDLY BE ADVANTAGEOUS FOR US IN THOSE LDC'S
HAVING CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE US, UNLESS THERE WERE OVER-
WHELMING OFFSETTING TECHNICAL BENEFITS. PRESUMABLY, THE
USSR WOULD BE EQUALLY CHARY IN THOSE COUNTRIES WHERE IT ENJOYS
RELATIVE ADVANTAGE IN TERMS OF POLITICAL SYMPATHIES.
IN ANY CASE THE SOVIETS WILL WANT TO REASSURE THEMSELVES
THAT ANY BILATERAL PROJECT IS FREE OF THE SLIGHTEST HINT
OF "HUMAN RIGHTS" INVOLVEMENT.
8. IN SUM, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS AGAINSTDEVOTING MUCH POLITICAL

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CAPITAL TO AN EFFORT TO ENGAGE SOVIETS IN MULTILATERAL
FORA ON NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE, EXCEPT IN CAREFULLY SELECTED
CASES. SOVIETS ARE NOT INCLINED TO PARTICIPATE AND, EVEN
IF THEY DID, WOULD PROBABLY NOT DIRECT THEIR ACTIVITIES IN
CHANNELS WE WOULD WELCOME. WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE LDC'S TO PUT
MORE PRESSURE ON THEM TO INCREASE THE SIZE AND SIMPLIFY THE
FORM OF THEIR AID COMMITMENTS, BUT WE SHOULD NOT EXPECT
THE SOVIETS TO DEVIATE FROM THEIR PREFERRED POLICY OF
CONCENTRATING AID ON KEY TARGETS THROUGH BILATERAL
MEANS. OUR BEST HOPE FOR ELICITING PRACTICAL COOPERATION
WITH USSR TOWARDS LDC'S LIES THROUGH USE OF EXISTING FRAME-
WORK OF BILATERAL AGREEMENTS, WHERE SOME LOW PROFILE COOPERATION
MIGHT BE FEASIBLE IF SOVIETS SHOW INTEREST AND RIGHT LDC'S
CAN BE FOUND.

9. IF DEPARTMENT PERCEIVES NO OBJECTIONS, SUGGEST THIS
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, MEETINGS, STUDIES, INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 25-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MOSCOW12331
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770307-0041
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770824/aaaaatrb.tel
Line Count: 409
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION SP
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 8
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 191928
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1487999
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NORTH-SOUTH STRATEGIES
TAGS: EGEN, ECIN, XX, US, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e4647053-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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